

“Keep Our Waterfronts Working: A Legislative Update”

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Dr. Jacobs works for Congressman Tom Allen of Maine, and focused her remarks on efforts to keep working waterfronts alive in that state and nationally through Mr. Allen’s recently introduced “Keep Our Waterfronts Working Act of 2007”.

What is a working waterfront?

- Property that gives access to water to businessmen and women, to make a living
 - Gave legislative definition, and discussed challenges associated with defining this concept at the state level and at the national level.

Working Waterfronts in Maine

- Geography
 - Maine has a 5,300 mile coastline including tidal lands and islands, and a long connection to the working coast.
 - Only 175 miles of coastline are sufficiently deep and sheltered to provide working waterfront
 - 1,045 provide working waterfront access, totaling only 20 miles
 - Only 82 provide prime working waterfront access (parking, fuel, etc); 62 support commercial Fishing (individuals)
 - 66% of current access points are privately owned, and therefore vulnerable to conversion.

- - How important are working waterfronts in Maine?
 - Comm. Fishing 39M jobs and \$750 mill in state revenue
 - Tourism, recreational, boat building, aquaculture, etc.
 - History and tradition: economic hearts of coastal regions

- A Working Waterfront Coalition has formed: 140 members, broad constituency; policy, planning, education, investment. Current focus:
 - Current use taxation
 - Bond programs to purchase working waterfront land
 - Working waterfront covenant
 - Create partners
 - Land-use research, etc.
 - Completed GIS mapping publication: at Island Institute
 - Data collected community to community; boat use, types of fishing, etc.
 - WW Access Pilot Program: criteria: economic significance, etc.
 - 6.82 acres protected so far; \$4 million worth

Working Waterfronts around the Nation: The Keep Our Waterfronts Working Act of 2007

- - Why a national legislative solution?
 - States strapped fiscally
 - Timeline is critical, right now
 - All citizens have a stake in working waterfronts

- Approach taken:
 - Outreach to Maine stakeholders, national working waterfront community
 - Consultation with NOAA, House Nat Res Committee
 - State and national industry and advocacy organizations – you guys are needed!

- Legislation introduced, HR 3223, this summer
 - Flexible: allows states to plan for and address regionally specific working waterfront needs.
 - Designed as amendment to CZMA; planning grants and implementation grants
 - Planning:
 - Target working waterfronts under threat of conversion
 - ID economic, social, cult values of working waterfronts to state
 - ID current availability of public access to coastal waters in working waterfront areas
 - Implementation
 - Acquisition of working waterfronts
 - Improvements to working waterfronts
 - Requirements: covenants, public access or improvement, 25% match
 - Bill under review; working to recruit co-sponsors right now